

# Feminist Pedagogy for a Digital Age ("A Feminist MOOC?")

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# “Panama Silver, Asian Gold: Migration, Money, and the Making of Modern Caribbean Literature.”

is a pilot for inter-collegiate digital humanities courses and was designed by Rhonda Cobham-Sander (Amherst College), Donette Francis (University of Miami), and myself at the University of Florida. It was supported by the libraries of all three institutions and was a pilot also library-supported DH courses at the University of Florida. We taught it at all three institutions in fall 2013— as a hybrid course with collaboration among campuses. It shares many of the objectives of the DOCC outlined by FemTechNet

# What is a DOCC? Distributed Online Collaborative Course

DOCC is a Distributed Online Collaborative Course. It is a feminist rethinking of the MOOC (Massive Open Online Course) that has been widely used in distance learning education. A MOOC is pedagogically centralized and branded by a single institution. FemTechNet seeks to enhance the system using feminist principles and methods that support a decentralized, collaborative form of learning. The fundamental difference is that the DOCC recognizes and is built on the understanding that expertise is distributed throughout a network, among participants situated in diverse institutional contexts, within diverse material, geographic, and national settings, and who embody and perform diverse identities (as teachers, as students, as media-makers, as activists, as trainers, as members of various publics, for example).

Excerpted from FemTechNet:

<http://fembotcollective.org/femtechnet/faq-for-femtechnet/>

# Defining Elements of a DOCC's Feminist Pedagogy

- Recognizes and engages expertise DISTRIBUTED throughout a network
- Approaches learning as a MIXED-MODE and BLENDED experience
- Taught through COLLABORATIVE peer-to-peer processes
- Respects diversity, specificity, and the local across a network
- Collaborative creation of HISTORICAL archive
- Collaborative EXPERIMENT in use of online pedagogies
- What will the Feminist Dialogues on Technology course look like?
  
- Feminist Dialogues on Technology, uses technology to enable interdisciplinary and international conversation while privileging situated diversity and networked agency.

# Not the DOCC on feminist engagements with technology and cultural innovation that was taught as nodal courses in Fall 2013 at

- Bowling Green State University
- Pitzer College
- CUNY
- Penn State
- Ontario College of Art and Design
- The New School
- Brown University
- Rutgers
- Pontificia Universidad Javeriana
- University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign
- Goldsmiths University of London
- Bucknell University
- SUNY
- UC Irvine
- Ohio State University
- Colby-Sawyer College
- California Polytechnic State University
- Yale

The course emerged from the desire to explicate and thus facilitate the use of dLOC's significant collection of literature, newspapers, journals, photographs that are relevant to the development of literature, nationalism, and Independence in the West Indies that includes:

J.J. Thomas *Froudacity*

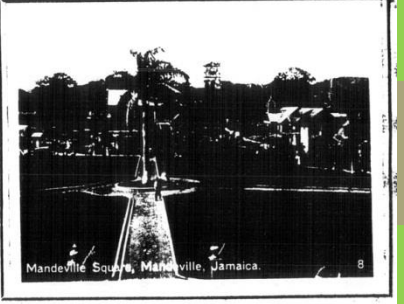
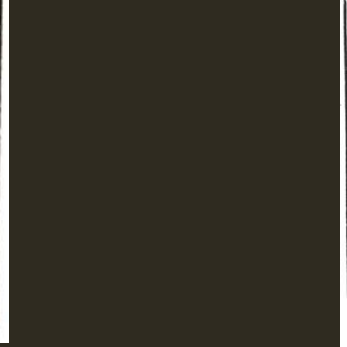
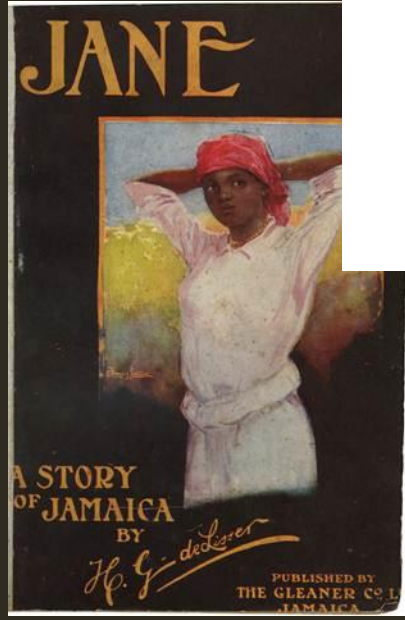
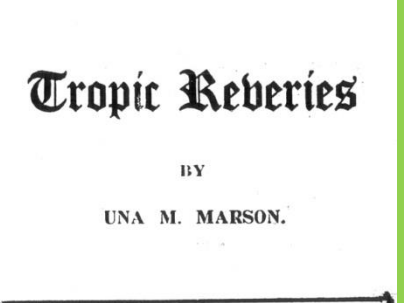
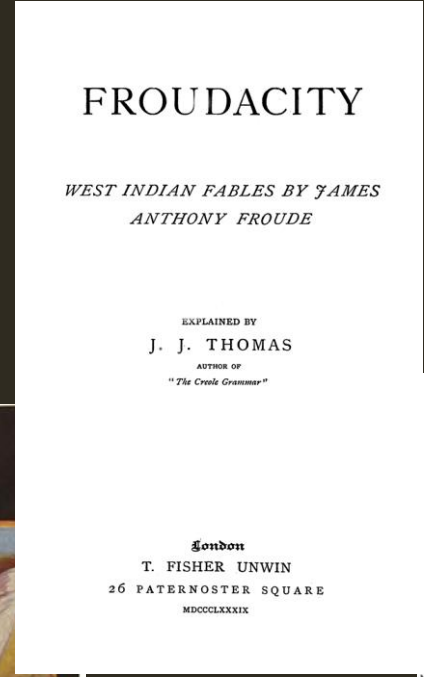
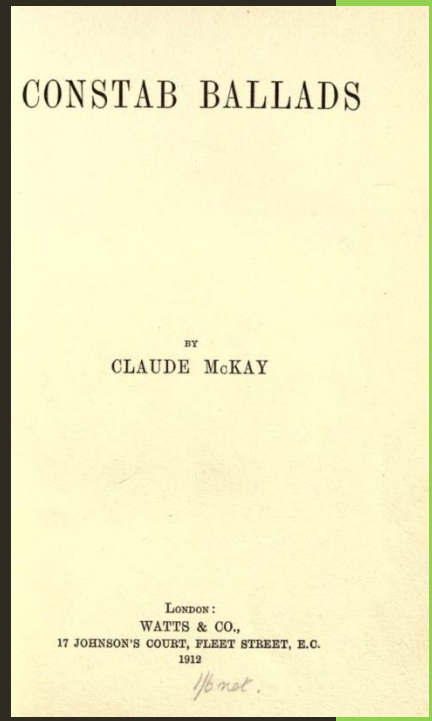
Claude McKay *Songs of Jamaica and Constab Ballads*

The Poetry of Una Marson

The All Jamaica Library

The Independence anthology of Jamaican literature

and nearly all books written by Herbert de Lisser



# Meet Your Faculty and Librarians

## Amherst College

Seminar meets Tuesdays 1-4 in Cooper House 101



**Rhonda Cobham-Sander**  
[ccobhamsande@amherst.edu](mailto:ccobhamsande@amherst.edu)  
Office: Cooper House 102  
Office hours: Wed./Thurs. 2-4



**Missy Roser**  
Head of Research & Instruction  
[mrosier@amherst.edu](mailto:mrosier@amherst.edu)  
office: Frost Library first floor

## University of Florida

Seminar meets Tuesdays 12:50-3:50 in Turlington 4112



**Leah Rosenberg**, [rosenber@ufl.edu](mailto:rosenber@ufl.edu)  
Office: Turlington 4346  
Office Hours: Wednesday 1-3; Thursday 11-12  
Phone: (352) 294-2848



**Laurie N. Taylor**  
[laurien@ufl.edu](mailto:laurien@ufl.edu)



**Margarita Vargas-Betancourt**  
[mvargas@ufl.edu](mailto:mvargas@ufl.edu)

## University of Miami



**Donette A. Francis**  
[d.francis@miami.edu](mailto:d.francis@miami.edu)

Office: 410 Ashe  
Office hours: Wednesday noon-2:30



**Beatrice Skokan**  
Librarian, Special Collections  
Department  
[bskokan@miami.edu](mailto:bskokan@miami.edu)



**Vanessa Rodriguez**  
E-Learning & Emerging Technologies  
Librarian  
[vrodrigu@miami.edu](mailto:vrodrigu@miami.edu)  
305. 284.4002

# Course Description

This interdisciplinary introduction to digital humanities and the use of historical research in literary analysis examines two often overlooked labor migrations that profoundly influenced the shape and timing of the emergence of modern Caribbean literary culture: The immigration of Chinese and Indian indentured laborers into the French, Dutch, and British West Indies between 1838 and 1917, and the emigration and return of the Afro-Caribbean workers who went to Panama to build the canal between 1904–1914.

**The premise of the course is that** capital from these two migrations bankrolled the entry of black and Asian Caribbeans into the educated middle class, thereby fostering the conditions that produced the first generation of nationalist politicians, as well as the first generation of Caribbean writers to achieve international acclaim. The historical archives for both migrant groups are limited and biased, providing rarely if ever the perspective of West Indian workers or indentured Asians. Literature has therefore played a critical role in imagining the migrations and their influence on the contemporary Caribbean and the descendants of the migrants.





# Vision

“We hope that the course will become part of a broader initiative to make visible to other teachers and scholars new ways of incorporating archival material into research on Caribbean literature and culture.

Since the Panama and Asian migrations are rarely privileged in stories Caribbean nationalists tell about the region, we want to use the project to intervene more broadly in the way Caribbean literary scholarship imagines the Caribbean cultural diaspora and interrogates the ways in which both traditional and colonial archival sources shape the stories we can tell about the Caribbean region.

We hope our experiment will sow the seed for future collaborative courses involving students at institutions in the Caribbean, Panama, China, and/or India, capable of working with relevant documents from these regions in languages other than English.”

-- Rhonda Cobham-Sander

# Course Objectives: Literary and Historical

- To gain a knowledge of key concepts, themes, tropes, styles, and aesthetic concerns of Caribbean literary discourse through examining literature about these two migrations—both that written during the migrations and contemporary literature that examines these migrations.
- To integrate this historical research into literary analysis, using contemporary historical studies, and primary historical sources such as government reports, oral histories, historical photographs, newspapers, and memoirs.
- To enhance dLOC's collection in two key areas: West Indians in Panama and Asians in the Caribbean
- To illuminate some of the limitations of the colonial archive records of subaltern and disenfranchised people and techniques used by Caribbean scholars, writers, and ordinary people to challenge and/or employ these colonial historical sources to illuminate the experience of indentured Asian immigrants and West Indians working in Panama.



## Faculty & Librarian collaboration for this course consists of :

- Collaborative design of syllabus including assignments (bi-weekly conference calls October 2012- June 2013 with librarians when needed plus 2-day meeting at UF hosted by the libraries.)
- Pooling resources for guest lectures & for digitizing materials (5 guest speakers on line, streamed to three campuses)
- Working with librarians from each campus to choose appropriate technology and design technology-based assignments—and then to teach these to students.



## Collaborative EXPERIMENT in use of online pedagogies

The three classes used technology to collaborate

They shared their assignments in the course Pbworks Wiki & Guest Lectures and Q&A with speakers via Vidyo

Zotero provided a shared library of resources identified by faculty, students, and librarians.

Technologies that have worked well: PbWorks, WordPress, Zotero, Vidyo



## Research methods and Digital Humanities

To use hands-on assignments to teach research methods for newspapers, photographs, memoirs, historical accounts, government records, oral histories.

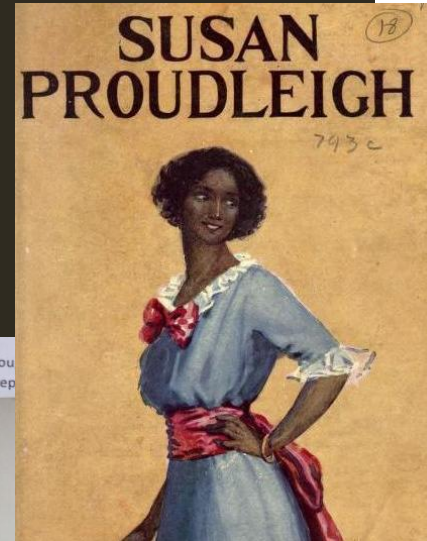
To introduce students to the technology used in

- digital archiving (producing metadata, exhibit labels, finding guides)
- digital humanities (e.g. PBworks, timelines and mapping programs, Zotero, WordPress, contributing to Wikipedia)

# Respect for the diversity, specificity, and the local & Critical Engagement with Technology

- The course explores challenges posed by digital archiving and addressed the question of how we can avoid reproducing the colonial structure of existing historical archival materials.
- Students note the absence of web presence for the Caribbean authors they study and see their work as potentially intervening in the US-European orientation of Wikipedia and other digital sources on literature
- Students produce digital research projects (such as finding guides, curated exhibits, timelines) that annotate and explicate literary and primary historical sources that address the bias and lacunae in the existing archive. Successfully completed projects will be added to the Digital Library of the Caribbean ([www.dloc.com](http://www.dloc.com)) to enrich the information available about these sources and help future scholars and students to make use of them.

# Collaborative creation of HISTORICAL archive



**BLACK LABOR**  
**ON A**  
**WHITE**  
**CANAL**  
PANAMA, 1904-1981  
Michael L. Conniff  
University of Pittsburgh Press

With the members of your group  
representation (or failure to rep  
and be prepared to

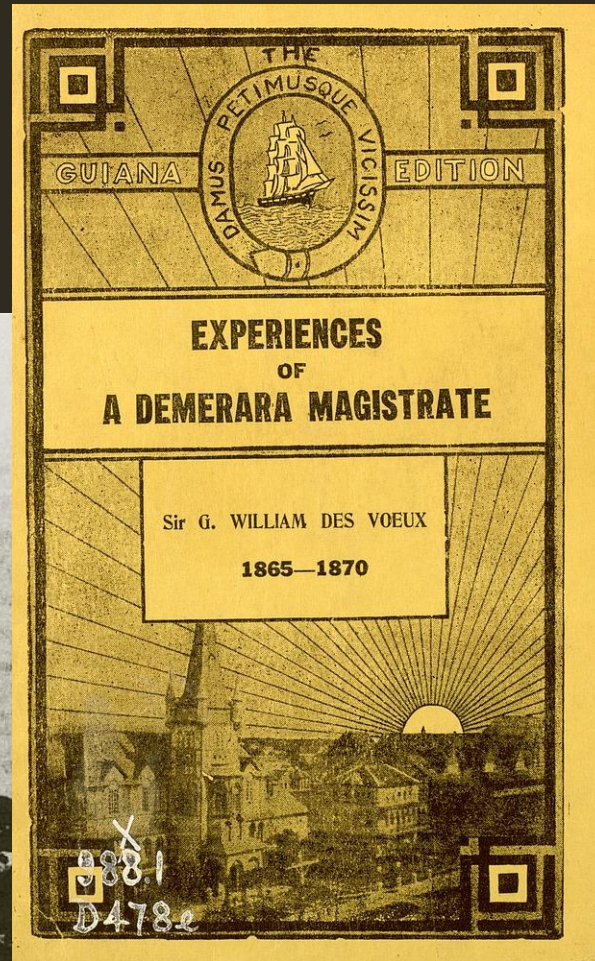


244-X<sup>1</sup> Hindoo laborers waiting for pay checks. Balboa, C.Z. June 11, 1913.



**VOICES FROM OUR AMERICA**

Enhancing dLOC's holdings concerning Asians in the Caribbean and West Indians, particularly women, active in Panama.



Susie Pearl Core  
*MAID IN PANAMA*



There are a number of Photos of the Colon Fire of 1940 that indicate the impact of the fire on the Afro-Antillano Community in Colon.



Great Fire of Colon April 13-14, 1940

These were donated to the Panama Canal Museum by Francis Williams

## New Resources in dLOC added for the class

Villalobos, Joan Victoria Flores. West Indian Women in the Panama Canal Zone, 1904-1914. Diss. Amherst College, 2010.

*Isthmian Historical Society competition for the best true stories of life and work on the Isthmus of Panama during the construction of the Panama Canal*

Mahase Snr., Anna. My Mother's Daughter. Trinidad: Royard Pub. Co, 1992. Web.

# Student Final Projects, 2013: potential enhancement of scholarly archive

Yasmina, Martin, Amherst College, "[Encountering cultures: the role of the Chinese shop in Jamaica, 1890-1940](#)" provides historical background/context for a specific novel, Patricia Powell's *Pagoda* but also a general overview of scholarship and key concepts about Chinese immigration to Jamaica, including historical photos and newspaper articles about anti-Chinese riots, and anti-Chinese racism (Yellow Peril).

Abigail Nichols, University of Miami, "[Women of the Panama Canal](#)"

There were very few open access or (proprietary) online sources of information concerning West Indian women in the Panama Canal projects. Nichols brings together information from two previously hard to access texts with images from primary sources to illuminate the different roles West Indian women played and to dismantle the general assumption that they were few in number and all employed in domestic work.

Dhanashree Thorat, University of Florida, "[Indian Indenture](#)"

Dhanashree will discuss this herself, but in brief her project places the memoir of one Indo-Trinidadian woman that narrates the story of her parents who migrated from Trinidad as indentured workers and places this story in the context of the large-scale migration through mapping and a timeline.

# Student Metadata Assignments Make West Indians Visible in the Archive of Canal Construction (2014)



“East chamber of Gatun Lock after filling, showing Gatun Lighthouse, Panama”

“I selected this item because it struck me as unusual and relatively unique. After looking at the photographs in Smathers Room 100, I noticed that not many of them had a West Indian central figure, especially the ones that were trying to capture the glory of the Panama Canal. For this picture to have a Canal worker ... as a primary figure is very interesting. I thought that it worked even better to emphasize the power and strength needed to finish the construction of the Canal, and gave a “voice” to one of the workers we seldom hear from. Having him stand and look out over his, and his people’s great effort, and assess the final product is quite powerful. I appreciate the effort that the photographer and Underwood and Underwood took with this photo to document not only the achievement of the Panama Canal in the eyes of Americans, but in the eyes of the workers as well” Chelsi Mullen

# Current Metadata

STANDARD VIEW

MARC VIEW

METADATA

USAGE STATISTICS

**Permanent Link:** <http://ufdc.ufl.edu/AA00015186/00001>

## Material Information

**Title:** East chamber of Gatun Lock after filling, showing Gatun Lighthouse, Panama

**Physical Description:** Photograph

**Donor:** [Angrick, Bill \( donor \)](#)

**Publisher:** Underwood & Underwood, Publishers

**Publication Date:** c. 1910s



## Notes

**Donation:** Gifted on behalf of William P. and Barbara L. Angrick

## Record Information

**Source Institution:** University of Florida

**Holding Location:** University of Florida

**Rights Management:** Applicable rights reserved on the material.

**Resource Identifier:** 2013.2.66

**System ID:** AA00015186:00001

# Chelsi Mullen's recommendations for enhanced metadata

- a. Subject: West Indian Male, Gatun Lock, Panama Canal
  - b. Abstract: Possible West Indian Canal worker stands on building overlooking the filling of the Gatun Lock in Panama. Gatun Lighthouse visible in background.
  - c. Physical Description: stereograph- black and white, black border with Underwood and Underwood Publishers trademark, dark-complected man standing in right foreground, canal water and bordering machinery in left foreground, mountains and lighthouse in background.
  - d. Photographer: unknown
  - e. Date Taken: unknown”

# Course materials are added to the archive

Already in dLOC: syllabi, assignments, and powerpoint presentations

Being added to dLOC: and videos of guest lectures and a finding aid or all the course materials

Plans in the future for more developed lecture notes and commentary for teaching the course.

# Further Collaboration

- Conference Panel on the course-- We organized a panel at the International Conference on Caribbean Literature, to introduce the project and invite other faculty to join, and we are planning to collaborative DH project concerning the course.
- Plan to teach the course collaboratively Fall 2015
- Plans underway to produce a DH project based on the course



# Meeting of Course Collaborators with SAMAAP at the West Indian Museum in Panama City, 16 November 2013



# Panel on the Course at the International Conference on Caribbean Literature, Nov. 13-15, Panama City



# Resources

This course was possible because

- It was a priority for the Digital Humanities librarian
- It dovetailed with Smathers Libraries' deep investment in Panama
- Each campus made monetary & in-kind contributions.

# Lessons

This course leveraged resources in cash, labor, and technology from all institutions.



We were able to produce course materials and research, to digitize documents, and to create videos of guest speakers, far beyond the value of the original funding which was @ \$10,000 between the three campuses. However, to create future collaborate online courses, we will need to need more funding sources and better technology.